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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, You are life, wisdom, truth, and blessedness. You are our hope and the center of our joy.

Lord, the Founders of this great land walked in Your guidance and rested in Your compassion. Unite us so that we can do Your will. Remove from us all evil desires and empower us to embrace the good. Speak to our Senators so that they may understand Your will for our Nation and our world.

Illuminate their understanding with beams of celestial grace. Make us thankful for the privilege of prayer. May we never take it for granted. Let us see Your goodness in our daily bread and in the gift of each new day. And, Lord, touch our world with Your peace. We pray this in Your holy name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. I ask the distinguished assistant Democratic leader to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

The Honorable HARRY REID led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning there will be a period for morning business to allow Senators to make

statements. At 10:30 today, the Senate will begin consideration of the conference report to accompany the partial-birth abortion ban bill. Under a unanimous consent agreement, there will be up to 4 hours of debate on that conference report. Under a previous order, the Senate will stand in recess from 12:30 until 2:15 for the respective party caucus meetings. After that recess, the Senate will continue consideration of the partial-birth abortion ban, with a vote on the conference report expected this afternoon. That vote will be the first vote of the day.

Following the vote on the partial-birth abortion ban, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1751, the class action fairness bill. I remind my colleagues that we had hoped to begin consideration of the class action legislation yesterday. Unfortunately, there was an objection to proceeding which is why it was necessary for us to proceed to move to that bill. Yesterday, we filed a cloture motion on the motion to proceed and that vote will occur tomorrow morning.

It is important that we are able to proceed with that bill. I understand there are differences on the substance of the legislation. However, the Senate should be allowed to consider those issues through debate and votes, as appropriate. Therefore, I once again encourage my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to allow us to begin work on the bill to bring some sense to the overall class action process.

I was also disappointed with the objection to proceeding to the Healthy Forests initiative. Chairman COCHRAN and others on both sides of the aisle have been working in good faith to bring that bill to the floor in a way to consider some concerns that may exist on the Democratic side. Again, there was an objection to proceed to that measure. I hope Members can, over the course of this morning and today, rethink that objection and allow de-

bate to begin on this very important initiative, the Healthy Forests legislation.

We are also working hard to clear for Senate action a number of other important issues, including the fair credit reporting bill, the so-called spam legislation, as well as an agreement to move forward on the charitable giving bill.

I remind my colleagues, both the Senate and the House have already passed their respective versions of that legislation and it is now time for us to move to conference and reconcile those differences. Having said that, we will continue to work with the Democratic leadership in an effort to reach an agreement to move forward on all of the bills I just mentioned.

As we approach the last weeks of this session, we need to redouble our efforts to stay focused and disciplined on these agreements so we can allow the Senate to consider all of these bills. I thank my colleagues in advance for their cooperation.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. While the majority leader is in the Chamber, I say on behalf of the minority, we acknowledge the importance of class action, Healthy Forests, charitable choice. Those are the ones I remember the leader speaking of. For example, charitable choice could be done within a matter of minutes and sent directly to the House. There has been a decision made by the majority—and I think not a proper one—to take it to conference. We could send it immediately to the House.

We are working very hard to try to cooperate with the majority on the most important piece of legislation, class action. A vast majority of Members on this side of the aisle want to do something on class action. We have had

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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